

What is claimed is:

1. The method of promoting a product or service comprising offering said product or service for sale either at first predetermined normal price or at a second predetermined reduced price if a chance event with a known probability occurs at the time of sale.

2. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 1 wherein said reduced price is zero.

3. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 2 wherein the occurrence of said chance event is determined by generating a random or pseudo-random number and determining whether or not said number satisfies a specified criteria.

4. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 1 wherein said step of offering said product or service for sale is followed by the further steps of:

receiving an acceptance of said offer by a purchaser,

performing a random or pseudo-random process to produce said chance event with said known probability, and

accepting from said purchaser a payment of said normal price if said chance event does not occur or accepting a payment of said reduced price if said chance event does occur.

5. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 4 wherein said reduced price is zero.

6. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 1 wherein the probability of occurrence of said chance event is preset by the seller.

7. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 6 wherein said probability of occurrence is included in the information provided to said purchaser prior to the time of sale.

8. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 1 wherein a purchaser is given the opportunity at the time of sale to elect to receive a predetermined discount rather than at said reduced price if said chance event occurs.

9. The method of promoting a product or service comprising offering said product or service for sale at first predetermined normal price or alternatively providing said product or service at no cost to the purchaser if a chance event occurs that is expected to occur only with a predetermined probability said product is sold.

10. The method of promoting a product or service as set forth in claim 9 wherein each purchaser that receives said product or service at no cost is selected by said chance event which occurs prior to the time said purchaser elects to purchase said product or service and wherein purchasers are advised prior to making any purchase that they may have been selected to receive said product or service at no cost.

11. The method of promoting products or services comprising offering said products or services for sale at stated prices or alternatively providing products or services selected for purchase by the purchaser at no cost to the purchaser if a chance event occurs at the time of sale that is expected to occur only with a predetermined probability when products or services are sold.

12. The method of promoting products or services as set forth in claim 11 wherein the probability of occurrence of said chance event is preset by the seller.

13. The method of promoting products or services as set forth in claim 12 wherein said probability of occurrence is included in the information provided to said purchaser prior to the time of sale.

14. Apparatus for executing the sale of goods or services comprising, in combination,
means for storing the normal sale price of said goods or services,
means for storing a control value that specifies the probability with which a chance event will occur when a random event generation process is performed,

means for performing said random event generation process at or before the time when identified goods or services are being purchased by a purchaser, and

means for presenting a request for payment from said purchaser at either said normal sale price of said identified goods or services if said chance event does not occur and at a reduced sale price if said random event does occur.

15. Apparatus for executing the sale of goods or services as set forth in claim 14 wherein said reduced price is zero.

16. Apparatus for executing the sale of goods or services as set forth in claim 14 including means for accepting and storing said reduced sale price of said goods prior to the time when said identified goods or services are being purchased by said purchaser.

17. Apparatus for executing the sale of goods or services as set forth in claim 14 wherein said random event generation process is performed prior to said time when said identified goods are purchased to randomly select individual purchasers who are to be charged said reduced sale price.

18. The method of promoting products or services comprising offering said products or services for sale at stated prices or alternatively providing products or services selected for purchase by the purchaser at reduced prices to the purchaser when chance events occurs at the time of sale that are expected to occur only with a predetermined probability when products or services are sold.

19. The method of promoting products or services as set forth in claim 18 wherein said stated prices and said reduced prices are included in the information provided to the purchaser prior to said time of sale.

20. The method of promoting products or services as set forth in claim 19 wherein the probability at which said chance events are expected to occur is included in the information provided to the purchaser at the time of sale.